

THE

# HISTORIAN



OF HANCOCK COUNTY

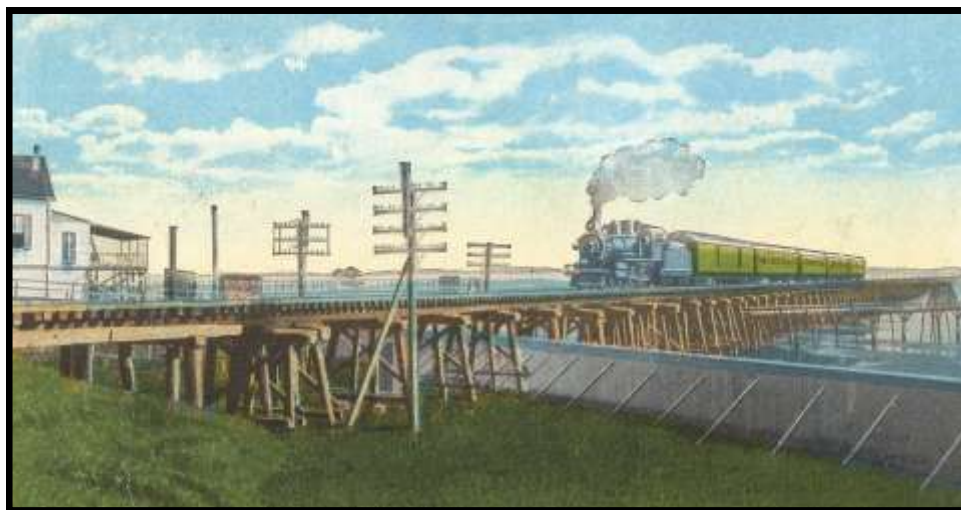
[www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com)

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

June 2025

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, June 19, 2025, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House (108 Cue Street). The guest speaker will be Mike Fitzwilliam. The title of his presentation is "Hibernia in New Orleans." **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 228-467-4090. **Please call no later than noon on Wednesday, June 18**, to make your reservation. Seating is limited to forty-eight (48) people, and we need to order the correct number of lunches. **Served at noon, lunch is \$15.00 for members and \$17.00 for non-members**, payable at the door. The catering order is submitted on Wednesday at noon prior to the luncheon on Thursday. If you need to cancel your reservation, please call by noon on Wednesday prior to the luncheon if at all possible so that the society does not incur unnecessary expenses. It is catered by Almost Home Catering with Chef Michelle Nichols. The menu for the luncheon this month is pork roast with peas and carrots, garlic mashed potatoes, green beans, yeast rolls, and triple chocolate brownies.



L and N Train Bridge across Bay St. Louis

## Commuter Trains along the Mississippi Gulf Coast

By  
Eddie Coleman

After the War Between the States, the railway system in the United States blossomed. Connecting the eastern and western coasts was a project begun by President Abraham Lincoln, and even though he didn't live to see his dream brought to complete fruition, his forward-thinking helped the nation industrialize and grow after its great conflict. Comfortable travel by rail became the usual means of travel for most Americans, and commuter travel for businessmen became even more convenient. In fact, at one time the Gulf Coast had as many as twenty-two passenger trains stopping daily at depots from Mo-

bile to New Orleans. These runs began in 1870 with the completion of the railway bridge across the Bay of Saint Louis and continued for over one hundred years.

Of these twenty-two commuter trains which traversed the Gulf Coast, one was specific to the Mississippi Coast. It ran from Ocean Springs to New Orleans Monday through Saturday and served the cities of Ocean Springs, Biloxi, Gulfport, Pass Christian, Bay Saint Louis, and Waveland. Depots and boarding stops in Hancock County alone were numerous with facilities at Bay Saint Louis, Waveland (Nicholson Avenue, Coleman Avenue, and Waveland Avenue), Clermont Harbor, Lakeshore, Ansley, and the Baldwin Lodge. It left Ocean Springs at 7:00 A. M. and arrived at the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal at 8:30 with one hundred to two hundred businessmen.

Seeing to the comfort and safe travel of the passengers were conductor Daniel J. Chancellor and

THE  
**HISTORIAN**  
OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
Lobrano House Director  
James Keating, Publisher

Published monthly by the  
**HANCOCK COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
AND MUSEUM**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Chris Roth, President  
Beverly Frater, Treasurer  
Georgie Morton, Secretary  
James Keating, Publicity Chairman  
Jim Codling, Historian and Parliamentarian  
Ron Thorp, Chairman of the House Committee  
Bryan Frater, Membership & Fund Raising  
Bert Young, Audiovisual Tech  
Casey Sullivan, Archivist  
Candee Canady, Member at Large  
Patrick Reeder, Member at Large  
Tom Stone, Member at Large

**MAILING ADDRESS:**

P. O. Box 3356  
Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi 39521

**PHYSICAL ADDRESS:**

108 Cue Street  
Telephone [228] 467-4090

**Email address:**

[hancockcountyhis@bellsouth.net](mailto:hancockcountyhis@bellsouth.net)

**Website:**

[www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com)  
Marianne Pluim, Webmaster

**LOBRANO HOUSE  
HOURS**

MONDAY — FRIDAY  
10:00AM — 3:00PM  
CLOSED 12—1 (lunch)

**Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

“TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESER-

engineer John Battiste White. Because their clientele usually consisted of the same businessmen, a close camaraderie developed between the railway employees and their passengers and among the passengers themselves. At the end of the run, Chancellor collected items left on the train by the men, kept them safe, and returned the raincoats, briefcases, etc., at the commuters' next boarding.

Although there were faster trains the men could take on their daily commutes, they chose this particular one because of its friendly and relaxing atmosphere. Often the businessmen passed the time by playing cards—bridge, gin rummy, or hearts. Some used the travel to catch up on business or even grab a

catnap along the way. One commuter, the father of twelve children, even remarked that the only rest he got was on the train!

Reaching the Crescent City in time to begin the business day, the men disembarked at the Carrollton or Union terminals and went their various ways. However, Mr. Chancellor retired to a hotel room for sleep. Even though his home was in Ocean Springs, his day had begun at 4:00 A.M. and would not end until about 10:00 P. M. after the late afternoon run back eastward and his retiring the train for the night. By 4:30 P.M., Mr. Chancellor was back in uniform and on duty at the Union terminal ready for the return trip to Ocean Springs.

The engineer, John White,

**THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

**Jim Keating, MD**

**July 20, 1944 - May 20, 2025**

The “dash” between one's birth and death is representative of how we spent our time on earth. I am sure that Jim's “dash” is full of personal and professional accomplishments. What I know best about Jim was his many contributions to the Hancock County Historical Society & Museum.

As president, I had the pleasure and opportunity to observe firsthand Jim's extraordinary research and writing skills. His monthly articles in the *Historian* are very informative, detailed and effectively captured the history of the people and communities in Hancock County. His talent was recognized by many and resulted in him being a weekly contributor of historical writings in the *Sea Coast Echo*.

Another accomplishment in Jim's writing career is the pending book *Moonlight and Magnolias* which is a compendium of informative and interesting articles he has written on the economic history of Hancock County. Jim has been working with the University Press of Mississippi in preparing the final manuscript for their review and publication. It is our goal to complete this process and have *Moonlight and Magnolias* as a contribution to Jim's legacy at the Historical Society.

On a personal note, Jim provided guidance to me as a new board member and subsequently as the Society President. He was very dedicated to the Society and did not hesitate to offer a counter point on occasion, which I appreciated and respected.

Jim's “dash” within the Historical Society is filled with many accomplishments and contributions to our success, and he will be missed and remembered for many years to come.

Chris Roth  
President





Men playing cards on their weekday commute from the Mississippi Gulf Coast to New Orleans—L to R Claude Baker [hidden], Bay St. Louis; Ben McGinnis, Pass Christian; Jack Bryan, Dick Mestayer, Jr., Dr. Sidney Ball, Waveland

was quite a character in his own right. A native of Ocean Springs, he had begun his career at the age of seventeen in the Louisville & Nashville shop at Mobile, steadily working his way up to engineer. Earlier in his career, Mr. White had run the *Smokey Mary*, an old wood burner from the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain. Making seven or eight trips daily, the last one on Saturday nights could be quite tumultuous. He said that he and his workers often piled all of the drunks onto the last coach and then left them at the police station on Dauphine and Elysian Fields to sober up by the next morning.

Later in his career Mr. White saw many people on his Ocean Springs to New Orleans run, and they became those familiar acquaintances we see during our daily routines, but never really meet. They'd wave to him in the summer and flash porch lights to him in winter. In the afternoons young children waiting for their fathers at the various stops anticipated a

friendly wave from Mr. White. So amiable was the relationship between the train personnel and the

commuters that the conductor, engineer, flagman, porter, and firemen received Christmas gifts each year from their passengers.

Time passes and things change; however, with the last run of this particular commuter train on May 6, 1964, daily commuter service along the Coast did not end. In fact, the *Hummingbird*, owned by the L&N Railroad, continued until January 1969 when high maintenance costs and a convenient and fast interstate highway system brought its demise. Nonetheless, a few remaining excursion/commuter trains held out and lasted until May 1971. They had such names as the *Azalean*, the *Piedmont*, the *Crescent*, and the *Pan American*. Although commuter service did resume for a short period of time during the summer and early fall of 1984 to coincide with the New Orleans World's Fair, it ultimately could not compete with the interstate highway system and the convenience of automobile travel. Thus, commuter service along the Mississippi Gulf Coast became a



Boarding at Waveland for the last ride of this commuter train on May 6, 1964 are (L to R) Mac Trelles, Rudy Vorbusch, Flagman Albert Biehl, Dick Mestayer, Jr., Max Giannelloni, and Gerald Kennedy, with Ronald Worrell and Doc Horn on the steps.



Bay St. Louis welcome center at the depo. The Historical Society has not found a record of what happened to this sign. However older folks can remember when it stood. Perhaps it was lost in Hurricane Camille in 1969

part of railway history.

## SOURCES:

- “Clickety Click, Clickety Clack—Commuters Coming Down the Track.” *Dixie, the Times-Picayune States Roto Magazine*, 14 Oct. 1956, no page given.
- “Begins on Daily Basis Sunday.” *The Sea Coast Echo*, 26 Apr. 1984, no page given.
- “Flashback: Excursion Trains.” *The Sun Herald*, 28 Mar. 1993, no page given.
- “Last Commuter Train—1964.” *The Sea Coast Echo*, no date given, no page given.

## Trains Come to the Coast

Edited by  
Scott Bagley and  
Eddie Coleman

Plans for the 140-mile Mobile to New Orleans route of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad were laid in the early 1850s. The first surveyor of the route, Colonel

A. A. Dexter, died after completing plans for the first 120 miles. Subsequently, Lewis Troost replaced Dexter, and he recommended a route going southwest from Mobile to Pascagoula.

As a result of this route change, the first marine obstacle was encountered: the split of the Pascagoula River into twin streams that enter the Gulf of Mexico about three miles apart. Along the rail route, the area between the forks consisted of sea marsh terrain, requiring extensive fill work as well as drawbridges.

Fourteen miles west, the route presented another challenge: the 6500-foot-wide Biloxi Bay, which would require a long trestle and draw span. Similarly, the next major Gulf inlet was the two-mile wide Bay of Saint Louis, calling for a drawbridge with trestle.

Moving westward the new rail route crossed into Louisiana near the point where the Pearl River empties into the Gulf and then proceeded along the thin tongue of land that appears to separate Lake Pontchartrain from the Gulf. While the area between the Pearl River and New Orleans has been described as land,

it is actually a thirty-mile strip of saltwater marsh barely above sea level. The freshwater lakes north of this strip drain into the Gulf via two meandering rivers, both deep compared to the inlets at Biloxi and Bay Saint Louis. Six miles into Louisiana, the proposed route crossed the Rigolets Pass about three-fourths of a mile wide.

Before the final route was selected, Troost considered an inland alignment skirting the three major Gulf inlets in Mississippi. This route did not pass through the thriving coastal towns and would have required heavier grades and more curvature than the coastal route. Although the chosen route went where the people were and had virtually no grades or curvature, Troost knew it was far more vulnerable to the nemesis of shipworms and storms.

In the book, *Memories of the Route*, Troost warned future builders about the *teredo navalis*, the shipworm notorious for its destruction of pilings. Troost noted that the only exception to failed attempts to treat timber against the worms was a new process whereby bituminous material containing creosote was injected into the timber. This process coagulated the sap, protecting the fibers from moisture. The treated wood was stronger and waterproof, unaffected by exposure to alternating wet and dry conditions.

While the original route was chosen under the authority of the Mobile & New Orleans Railroad, construction of the line was undertaken by a new corporate entity, the New Orleans, Mobile & Chattanooga Railroad.



The photo at the left shows the original Bay St. Louis Depot which burned in the early 1900s.

The photo at the right shows the Waveland Depot, possibly in the mid 1950s.



Ceremonial groundbreaking took place at Mobile in 1867, but construction did not begin until February 3, 1869, under the direction of Chief Engineer Henry Van Vleck. Among the original construction contracts were those for 400,000 crossties, 2.6 million cubic yards of earthwork, 4500 feet of truss bridge, and 25,000 feet of pile and trestle bridging. Also, there were four iron pivot bridges for the Pascagoula River, Biloxi Bay, Bay of St. Louis, and Rigolets Pass with motive power supplied by Rogers Locomotive Works of Paterson, N. J. By the end of 1869, eighty miles of track had been finished, the entire line from Mobile to New Orleans being completed in twenty months.

In April 1871, the Mobile & New Orleans name was changed to the New Orleans, Mobile, & Texas Railway Company, reflecting plans to continue to Houston.

As foreshadowed by Troost, the primitive pilings which supported the railroad in the marshy areas were soon attacked by shipworms. Thus, a massive rebuilding was necessary, and this work pushed the construction to twice the original estimate of \$3.5 million before the line was opened in late 1870.

Because of the excessive costs combined with other problems, the New Orleans, Mobile, & Texas rail line defaulted on its interest payment for construction bonds in January 1873. Cutback remedies failed, and the company was compelled to do pioneer work in timber preservation. In 1869 the railroad constructed the nation's first plant, at Gautier, to repel the *teredo* by soaking or boiling timbers in oil. Unfortunately, however, the treated pilings driven into the Bays of Biloxi and St. Louis were destroyed by the *teredo* within nine months! As a result, the company sent J. W. Putnam to England to

study the new creosoting process.

After Putnam's return in 1874, he rebuilt the Gautier plant for the treatment of timber by forcing the oil under pressure into heated wood. Piles treated in this manner lasted for many decades. Hence, by the 1900's, this creosoting technique was used to prevent any kind of decay to crossties and pilings as well as bridge supports.

In conclusion, bringing railroads to the Gulf Coast was not an easy task. Miles of marshy terrain, rivers with divergent paths, and the ever-present shipworm presented challenges to these nineteenth century engineers. Nonetheless, they were equal to the task, and a dependable railroad line, which follows the same basic path today, was at last in place.

#### SOURCE:

Lachaussee, J. G. and J. Parker Lamb.  
"The Railroad That Walks on Water—How the Old Reliable Reached Canal Street," *T rains*, January 1987.

## Childhood Memories

Remembrances of  
Chris Roth

The trains were the black steam driven engines until they were upgraded to the newer diesel driven models. There was a "round house" at the depot that allowed engines to be pulled off the main track for whatever reason and turned around; hence the name "round house" and put back in service on the original route or reversed.

There was an elevated water tank adjacent to the track to refill the steam engines.

There were porters to load and unload freight.

For the depot to send or receive packages by train, a hook was elevated on a pole to allow a mail satchel to be attached. Whether the package was either sent or brought in, the train did not stop. It only slowed down so that a trainman was allowed to reach out with a hook and retrieve the satchel.

Back in the day, we lived in the Bay all summer, and my father would commute to the City or Town aka New Orleans. He would leave the Bay Monday morning and return Wednesday evening, leaving again Thursday morning and returning Friday evening. I suspect that with the opening of the interstate, driving was a more attractive option.

Remembrances of  
Beverly Frater

My father also would commute during the summer. He spoke of the club car, where the men would read the newspaper in the mornings. In the evenings, they would play cards and start the cocktail hour.

He also said that when he was a boy, local boys would stand on the platform with boxes mounted on sticks. The boxes contained snacks, sandwiches, etc. When the train stopped, they would hold the boxes next to the windows, and the passengers would buy things.

Beginning when I was probably twelve years old, my friends and I would ride the train to Canal Street, have lunch, shop, go to a movie, and then return on the train in the evening. I can remember that there was a water spigot with small conical paper cups. The water was always so very cold, and I thought it was delicious on a hot day!



This is my favorite story! When my grandfather retired to Waveland in the early 1950's, my grandmother would ride the train to New Orleans to attend her parties and club meetings. From their house in Waveland, my grandfather could hear the train whistle as it passed through Clermont Harbor on its return trip, and that was his notice to head for the train station at Waveland Avenue to meet her. One winter night he was not there when the train arrived. As my grandmother stood alone on the platform, the conductor refused to leave her in the dark. He held up the train and waited with her. When he finally saw the headlights of the car heading up Waveland Avenue he waved his lantern to signal the engineer that the train could now depart.



**EDMOND-FAHEY**  
FUNERAL HOMES  
SINCE 1895

Stop in and see our new renovations including chapel, furnishings, audio/video, and more.  
Locally owned Bradford-O'Keefe affiliate

**NEW MEMBERS**

Melissa Gibbons  
*Bay St. Louis, MS*

Donelle Johnson  
*Commerce City, CO*

Ronald R. Nix  
*Waveland, MS*

Joellen Strong  
*Bay St. Louis, MS*

**IN MEMORY OF**

Dr. James Keating  
Publicity Chairman, Hancock County  
Historical Society



# 100 MEN HALL D.B.A.

MISSISSIPPI - U.S.



## MUSIC / CULTURE / COMMUNITY



**BOOKER FEST**  
every labor day weekend



**Indulge in a luxurious one-night getaway with two buffets Sunday through Thursday.**

To reserve, call 1-866-SLIPPER (754-7737), ext. 0. Exclusions: This offer is not applicable on Friday and Saturday.

**MENTION CODE: DATENITE**



www.silverflipper-mo.com • 1-866-SLIPPER • 1-866-754-7737  
5000 South Beach Blvd. • Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

Rooms based on availability. Advanced room reservations and credit card upon booking required to guarantee room.  
24-hour cancellation required. Non-transferrable. Cannot be combined with other offers.  
Must be 21 years of age or older. Must present Players Card and valid photo ID at check-in. Tax not included.  
Does not include incidental charges. Management reserves the right to cancel and/or modify this offer.  
Additional restrictions may apply. Offer only valid for new reservations. See Players Services for details.





## GARDENIA TEA ROOM

BY ALMOST HOME

www.gardeniatearoom.com  
228-332-2334



**Steve B. Treutel**

**Vice President**

**Senior Financial Advisor**

Mississippi Gulf Coast  
(228) 385-6307

Merrill Lynch Wealth Management makes available products and services offered by Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith incorporated, a registered broker-dealer and member SIPC, and other subsidiaries of Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved.  
AD-06-12-0048 ARSOT2V1-10-11 Code 453007PM-0612

### THE LITTLE HOUSE OF HEALING



In *The Little House of Healing* by L.L. Lee, nine troubled individuals from a recently divorced woman to a courageous cancer battler, seek solace and a fresh start in the serene haven of Miss Lucy's peaceful Bay St. Louis cottage. This inspirational novel explores redemption and the resilience of the human spirit.

Available at Amazon.com, Historical Society, and some local shops in Bay St. Louis

**PATRICK MARTINEZ**  
Financial Advisor

**RAYMOND JAMES®**

T 228.466.9888 843 Highway 90  
F 228.466.9978 Bay Saint Louis, MS 39520  
patrick.martinez@raymondjames.com  
www.RaymondJames.com

Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC.

## FORD REALTY

(601) 798-6202 800-354-FORD(3673)

Residential, Timberland, Ranches, Commercial



**MARTHA FORD, Broker, GRI SFR**

MARTYFORD@BELLSOUTH.NET

CELL 601-590-2988

www.fordrity.com



1004 Memorial Blvd  
P.O. Box 418  
Picayune, MS 39466  
Fax 601-799-0202

Est. 1949



## Descendants of Juan de Cuevas



24567 Standard Dedeaux Rd  
Kiln, Ms 39556

Phone: (228) 222-0071 Fax: (228) 255-7195

descendantsofjuandecuevas@outlook.com

Website: www.cuevasofcatisland.org

\*Follow us on Facebook and YouTube\*

## Family Association

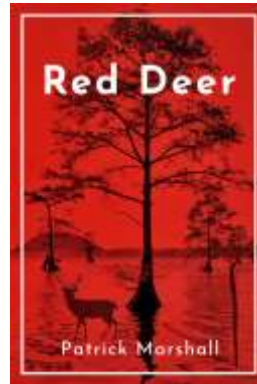


**REAL ESTATE SALES & RENTALS**  
 SINCE 1928 - CELEBRATING 90 YEARS!



**ASHMAN-MOLLERE** REALTY INC.

418 HWY 90 - WAVELAND- 228-467-5454  
 WWW.ASHMAN-MOLLERE.COM



*Red Deer* is fantasy infused historical fiction. Jesse Walker, a 16 year old from present day Gulf Coast Mississippi, is transported back through time to the legendary birthplace of the Choctaw people, NanihWaiya village.

**HUBBARD'S WAVELAND  
 HARDWARE**

" IF YOU DONT THINK WE HAVE IT, ASK US!!"

**DAVID & RICHARD HUBBARD**

615 NICHOLSON AVE  
 WAVELAND, MS 39576

PHONE: (228)467-4494 FAX: (228)467-7632

**Mayley's  
 PestControl, LLC**

your local answer to what's  
 bugging you



Cell: 228-380-0755

Ofc: 228-380-0295

Licensed • Bonded • Insured

**Knowledgeable • Professional**

**David Mayley**

mayleys.pest.control@gmail.com

603 Esplanade Ave.

Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

Bay St Louis:  
 412 Hwy 90  
 228-466-4498

Biloxi:  
 2505 Pass Rd  
 228-385-1177

Diamondhead:  
 5400 Indian Hill  
 228-467-2272



**SOUTHGROUP**  
 INSURANCE SERVICES  
 GULF COAST

• We offer Personal, Business, Life  
 and Health Insurance

• We help our clients save  
 money and get more value.

• We are Trusted Choice  
 and have been awarded the  
 Best Practices Designation.

For more information, please  
 visit our website:

www.southgroupgulfcoast.com

central fax: 888-415-8922



Angela S. Threlkeld, CFP  
 President  
 SouthGroup Insurance  
 Gulf Coast

**Alice Moseley  
 Folk Art Museum**

honors nationally acclaimed Folk Artist,

**Alice Latimer Moseley**

**(1909-2004).**



*"The House is Blue, But the Old Lady Ain't"*

**Monday-Saturday  
 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**

**Located in the Historic Train Depot**

**1928 Depot Way, Bay St. Louis, MS**

**228-467-9223**

**www.alicemoseley.com**

**FREE ADMISSION!**



**HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
and MUSEUM**  
P. O. BOX 3356  
BAY ST. LOUIS, MS 39521

**STREET ADDRESS: 108 CUE ST.**  
**PHONE: 228.467.4090**

**NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION**

U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 87  
BAY ST. LOUIS, MS

**HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY and MUSEUM**

P. O. BOX 3356, BAY ST. LOUIS, MS 39521

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Online payment may be made at [www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, AND ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP LEVEL**

Founder Individual \$30 \_\_\_\_ Founder Family \$50 \_\_\_\_

Thomas Shields \$100 \_\_\_\_

Charles Gray Society \$250 \_\_\_\_

Life Time \$500 \_\_\_\_

**DUES RENEW IN JANUARY OF EACH YEAR**